DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 270 272 RC 015 778

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TITLE	Tree-Ties.
INSTITUTION	Minneapolis Public Schools, Minn.
PUB DATE	80
NOTE	16p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Special School District No. 1, Minneapolis Public Schools-Planning, Development and Evaluation, 807 Northeast Broadway, Minneapolis, MN 55413-2398 ($3.25, plus $5.00 billing charge unless prepaid).
PUB TYPE	Guides - Classroom Use - Materials (For Learner) (051)
EDRS PRICE	MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	*American Indian Culture; *American Indian Education; American Indians; Art Materials; *Botany; *Cultural Influences; *Educational Games; Elementary Secondary Education; Food; Interdisciplinary Approach; Learning Activities; *Pharmacology; Tribes
IDENTIFIERS	*Ojibwe (Tribe)

ABSTRACT

Created to help students understand how plants were used for food, for medicine, and for arts and crafts among the Ojibwe (Chippewa) Indians, the game Tree-Ties combines earth and social sciences within a specific culture. The game requires mutual respect, understanding, and agreement to succeed. Sounding like the word "treaties", the title is a play on words. "Tree" refers to the emphasis on botany. How it "ties" to other aspects of culture is what the game is about. The game involves 36 players, divided into teams of 6, and allows students to study information individually, cooperatively with other team members, and then competitively. Plants and plant products/parts included in the game are pumpkin blossoms, wild rice, maple sugar, birch bark, basswood fiber, corn, arrowhead, dogbane, clover, onion roots, burdock leaves, tobacco, golden rod, wild geranium roots, calamus, lady slipper roots, honeysuckle, chokecherry bark, raspberry root, sasparilla root, poplar bark, tamarack bark, catnip leaves, dogwood bark and roots, aster roots, balsam poplar, prickly ash, moss and cattail down, spruce, hickory, hemlock, oak, maple, and alder. All these plants and trees are listed together with their uses. The booklet details rules for playing the game and provides examples of each of the 36 game information cards. (NEC)

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TREE - TIES

by

Rick Gresczyk

Chapter 312 - Gikino'amadiwin Project
Minneapolis Public Schools

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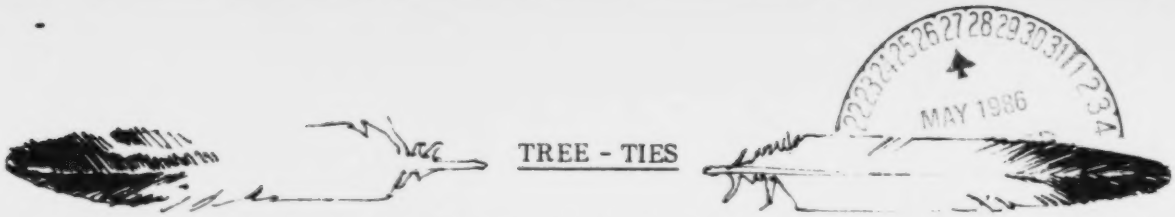

TREE - TIES

I created this game to help students understand how plants were used for food, for medicine and for arts and crafts among the Chippewa (Ojibwe) Indians. It shows how they understood and used their natural resources. It combines an earth science with a social science within a specific culture. Many tribes, including the Ojibwe were far advanced in their understanding of medicine. This has been one of their most important contributions to the world. They understood that every plant was created for a purpose and they used them respectfully. Most medicines found in today's drug stores were already known and used by Indians in their natural plant form. The knowledge and power of American Indian healers and medicine people are to be respected. Any one disease may have several cures and each plant may have several uses. This game is a brief introduction to the world of plants and does not intend to be offensive, nor complete. It is my belief that almost all things within traditional Indian cultures were religious, since religion was a part of all life. When anything was taken from the earth, it was done in a religious way for a religious purpose. The beauty, the mystery, the power within life should never be taken for granted nor forgotten.

Each set should contain thirty-six different cards. Cards from each set should be evenly distributed to each member on each team. Each member is then responsible to learn the information on the cards given to him. Perhaps five to ten minutes for this activity is sufficient. Complete silence should then be emphasized since the activity is individual in nature.

For the next ten to twenty minutes team members will help each other to learn the information on each other's cards. Ideally each member of the team will now have learned all thirty-six facts. Then the teacher initiates the third activity, a game of competition, in which the teams stand each other. It is important that the teacher determines the ground rules and that the students understand that the main purpose of the game is to review in a fun way.

The teacher may wish to question the team members individually or as a team, allowing for consultation, setting a time limit and a specific scoring procedure or the teacher may choose to structure it with class input. Experience has proven to me that in any case the students must clearly understand the game and how it is to be played.

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A most important dimension of this game is that it allows for three valid learning structures within one time period; the chance for a student to study information individually, cooperatively with other members of his team and then competitively in a game. I use a play on words for the title of this game. It sounds like treaties, an important term and concept. It has both historical and contemporary significance. It means an agreement between two or more people. In order for a game or an event to succeed there must be mutual respect, understanding and agreement. Tree refers to the emphasis on botany. How it ties into other aspects of culture is what this game is about.

It is my hope that this game proves to be an educational and enjoyable experience for both you and your students.

Rick Gresczyk

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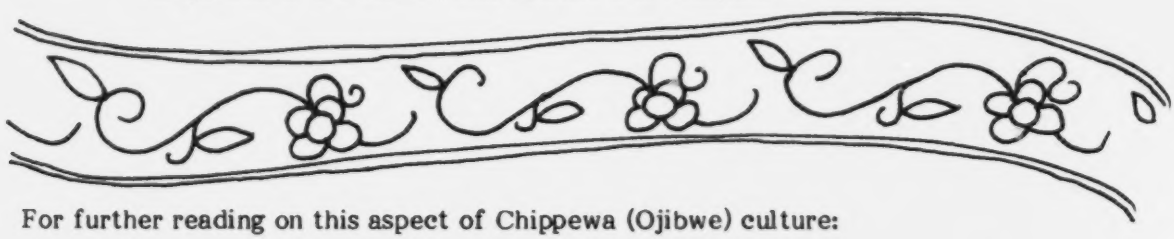
Main objective:

The students will better understand the use of plants for food, medicine, arts and crafts among Chippewa (Ojibwe) Indians.

1. Given a set of cards, students will learn plant facts in order to participate in the game Tree-ties.

2. Given the structure of the game, students will use three modes of information acquisition: individual, cooperative and competitive.



For further reading on this aspect of Chippewa (Ojibwe) culture:

Densmore, Frances. How Indians Use Wild Plants for Food, Medicine and Crafts. New York. Dover Publications. 1974. (original: 1928)

Lyford, Carrie A. Ojibwa Crafts. Washington D.C., U.S. Department of Interior. 1943.

Smith, Huron. Ethnobotany of the Ojibwe Indians. Bulletin of the Public Museum. Volume 4, Number 3.

SELECTED RULES (for 36 students)

Introduce the game.

- Depending upon your students, you may wish to vary the timing.
- Divide the class into 6 teams, 6 players on each team.
- Give each team an envelope of cards.
- Distribute 6 cards to each member on each team.
- Tell the students that each of them individually has 10 minutes to quietly study the information on their cards.

After 10 minutes:

- Tell the students to sit together with their team, perhaps, in a circle, in order to best help each other.
- Tell them to help each other learn all the information on their cards, quizzing each other, reading each other's cards and discussing the information.

After 20 minutes every student should have some knowledge about each card.

After 20 minutes:

- Ask the students to sit in their 6 rows, each row being a team.

Collect all cards.

Identify each team on the board by a number or name.

Emphasize again that the purpose of the game is to learn the information by reviewing in a fun way.

Begin by asking individuals a model question.

Model a response - Teacher: What was used to thicken broth?
Student: Pumpkin blossoms.

Continue practicing until the students understand this procedure.

Explain the scoring.

Ask the first player in row one to answer the question for 20 points. If that student doesn't know, ask the first person of team #2 for 10 points. If (s)he doesn't know, ask the first person in row #3 for 10 points, etc.

After the student has been asked, (s)he should go to the back of the row and the second student should move to the first seat. This rotation method encourages an equal opportunity to answer the questions.

When a question is answered correctly the next player on the next team has the first chance to answer the next question. The answer is worth 20 points when it is first asked, then it continues to be worth 10 points.

The team with the most total points wins.

The rationale for playing this game is to give every student the chance to learn individually, cooperatively and in competition. The emphasis must be put on fun and learning and not on winning. Have fun!

- Rick Gresczyk

TREE - TIES

1. Pumpkin blossoms were used to thicken broth.
2. Wild rice was the most important cereal (grain).
3. Maple sugar was often used in place of salt.
4. Birch bark was used to make containers, canoes, scrolls and shelters.
5. Basswood fiber was used for tying.
6. Corn was often made into hominy.
7. Arrowhead is called the "wild potato."
8. Dogbane roots were used for headaches.
9. Tea from the leaves and flowers of clover was used for heart problems.
10. Tea from wild onion roots was used for colds.
11. Tea from burdock leaves was used for coughing.
12. Tobacco was offered, whenever any medicine was taken from the earth.
13. Tea from goldenrod roots was used for chest pains.
14. A powder from wild geranium roots was used for a sore mouth.
15. Calamus roots were dried and chewed for toothaches.
16. Lady slipper root tea was used for toothaches and upset stomaches.
17. Tea from the leaves of the honeysuckle bush was used for stomach aches.
18. Tea from chokecherry bark was used for cramps or as a hair rinse.

19. Red raspberry root tea was used for diarrhea.

20. Wild sarsaparilla roots were mashed and put on sores or in the nose to stop bleeding.

21. Poplar bark was chewed and put on cuts.

22. The inner bark of tamarack was chopped fine and put on burns.

23. Goldenrod flowers were dried, moistened with cold water and put on skin sores.

24. Tea from catnip leaves was used for fevers.

25. Tea from dogwood roots was used to wash sore eyes.

26. Aster root liquid was dropped into ears for earaches.

27. Buds of the balsam poplar were boiled for a warm compress on sprains.

28. Boiled prickly ash roots were used in a bath to strengthen limbs.

29. Moss and cattail down were used for diapers.

30. Spruce roots were used in sewing canoes.

31. The inner bark of red osier dogwood was smoked in pipes.

32. Hickory was used to make bows.

33. Hemlock bark helped make a red dye.

34. Inner bark of the oak helped make black dye.

35. Rotten maple wood was used for purple dye.

36. The inner bark of alder was used for yellow dye.

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Hickory was used to make bows.

Hemlock bark helped make a red dye.

Inner bark of the oak helped make black dye.

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Rotten maple wood was used for purple dye.

The inner bark of alder brush was used for yellow dye.

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